A 20 Percent Solution?

Defense budgets are going to have to get about 20 percent bigger just to keep the US military from shrinking, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Half of that increase is needed to cover recently enacted hikes in pay and benefits, while the other half is needed to replace equipment which is getting too old.

The level of spending that is required just to maintain the status quo is “20 percent higher than current funding”—excluding the costs of contingencies such as Afghanistan and Iraq—and 10 percent higher than the peak of military spending during the so-called Reagan buildup of the 1980s, according to CBO director Douglas Holtz–Eakin.

In October testimony before the House Budget Committee, Holtz–Eakin said the Pentagon needs some $44 billion more budget authority each year to cover “substantial increases in future purchases of equipment and weapons to fill the gap created by the ‘procurement holiday’ of the 1990s,” as well as to invest in new systems and technologies.

If the money is provided, the Pentagon “will eventually be able to halt or reverse adverse aging trends associated with much of its current equipment.”

If not, warned CBO, the Defense Department will either have to cut troop levels and inventories or keep equipment until it is older—perhaps significantly so—than current plans envision.

Because of the high cost of technology-intensive aircraft, the Air Force “typically has the largest investment budget of any of the services,” Holtz–Eakin said, averaging a 38 percent share of the annual procurement budget vs. 17 percent for the Army and 35 percent for the Navy–Marine Corps.

Under the Pentagon’s own plans, the Air Force would have to see an increase from $50 billion in 2004 to $58 billion by 2009 just to fund the aircraft in the development or production pipeline. In inflation-adjusted terms, the Air Force’s need for investment dollars will peak at $72 billion by 2021, CBO determined. However, CBO said the cost growth historically seen in USAF’s major programs would likely mean an actual annual average of $74 billion over the period 2010-22, with a peak of $84 billion.

CBO assumed that the F/A-22 and F-35 both go forward as planned and that some replacement or augmentation of today’s Air Force nuclear systems (bombers and ICBMs) is developed. Since those plans are still being formulated, CBO based its projections on “experience with the costs and schedules of previous bombers and ICBMs,” but its charts indicate that it expects the Air Force will buy the FB-22, a dedicated long-range attack version of the F/A-22.

According to CBO, USAF needs to buy about 150 fighters a year to maintain today’s fleet size at a “steady state,” but Pentagon plans—the future years defense program and projected out-years—don’t get up to that level until 2011-15. Funding for fighters is about $4 billion in Fiscal 2004, but would have to be double that to preserve the steady state. The Pentagon doesn’t forecast such a spending level until 2012.

Using USAF numbers, CBO determined that the Air Force’s fighters and tankers are the most aged parts of the fleet and will average 20 and 40 years, respectively, by 2010. CBO compared those figures with the “half-life” of systems—half the planned or expected full service life—to see if most of the fleet was young or old. Fighters have a half-life of 10-15 years, while tankers have one of 28-33 years.

Even if the F/A-22 and F-35 fighters and KC-767 tanker all go forward, CBO found, the fighter and tanker fleets overall will still average more than the suggested half-life in 2010. By 2020, fighters finally get down to 15 years average age, while tankers get down to 34 years.

Using the same method, CBO determined that the bomber fleet is practically spry, averaging only 35 years of age in 2010, vs. a half-life of 35-40 years. Airlifters will continue to average a youthful 23-27 years old by 2020, vs. a half-life of 18-23 years.

All this means that, to combat the aging aircraft problem, USAF will have to concentrate on fighters and tankers in the near term.

Go for Effects-Based Operations

Just as it’s becoming imperative to use force discriminately—avoiding civilian casualties and the destruction of nonmilitary targets—the enabling technology has arrived, declared the Defense Science Board.

This, said a recent DSB report, means effects-based operations are “coming of age.” EBO is now the stock in trade of the United States Air Force.
In its recent report, “Discriminate Use of Force,” a DSB task force said the US military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan showed that instantaneous media coverage of war, the need to hold public support, the requirement to keep coalitions together, and the need to demonstrate restraint have made it essential to use minimum force necessary wherever possible in combat.

At the same time, the DSB said such discriminate force is made possible by “new weapons, improved intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, shared situation understanding, improved individual and collaborative training, greater agility, smaller footprints, and other emerging capabilities of the US military that allow more timely and precise use of force than heretofore possible.”

The DSB suggested that the Pentagon work toward performing strategic and operational level planning with the same level of “detail, coherence, and comprehensiveness” that it can now do at the tactical level. Specifically, it suggested creating a Strategic Campaign Support Center to plan for regional conflicts, apply effects-based methods, and “invent concepts of operations involving all the instruments of US power and game alternative courses of action.”

This organization would be set aside from other organizations but reflect parts of them all. The task force wrote that this supra-agency organization “should be perceived as too diplomatic for DOD, too military for State, too oriented to open-source information for the intelligence community, and too transnational for anyone.” It would work to create behavioral and predictive “models” of possible adversaries.

Still, the suggested center would “complement, not replace, responsibilities and authorities of regional combatant commanders.” It would be broad in scope in bringing in expertise from virtually every Cabinet department and help coordinate diplomatic, intelligence, and economic actions “prior to the need for military force.” Initially, this center should work with US Strategic Command and US Special Operations Command.

The planners who pulled together the recent campaigns in Southwest Asia, using precision to substitute for mass and keeping an eye on infrastructure that would be needed in the postwar period, are “a precious resource,” and the Defense Department should cultivate more like them, the task force said.

“From our perspective,” task force co-chairs Ted Gold and Joshua Lederberg wrote, “their groundbreaking experience in effects-based campaigning would be invaluable in helping restructure military professional development to prepare future commanders and their staffs to conduct effects-based operations.”

Discriminate use of force and effects-based operations should be central to US military transformation, and the Pentagon should launch a study on how it will incorporate them at every level, the DSB panel recommended.

From some quarters in the military, the task force heard only criticism of discriminate use of force and effects-based operations. Critics—many of whom are in the Army—charged that the “constraint in the use of force will be seen as weakness” or that such a philosophy would raise false hopes for a bloodless war. To the former, the DSB panel said that the philosophy is “not about restraint; it is about the clarity of objectives and attention to achieving multiple and often competing objectives.” To the latter charge, the panel said, “We have no such expectations” that war will be bloodless in the future.

Key enablers of this new style of war are persistent ISR, targeting, collaboration with other participants, preparation during peacetime, predictive intelligence, and fast, accurate bomb damage assessment. This last item is something that Gen. John P. Jumper, Air Force Chief of Staff, has said was one of the main sore spots of Gulf War II.

**Old Europe’s “Paper Armies”**

NATO forces must become more efficient and battle worthy if the 19-nation alliance is to remain relevant against new threats, warned NATO Secretary—General George Robertson.

The alliance has to increase “the deployability and usability” of its forces, Robertson said at an October meeting of NATO defense ministers in Colorado Springs, Colo.

“Out of 1.4 million non-US soldiers under arms, the 18 non-American allies have around 55,000 deployed on multinational operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, and yet they feel overstretched,” Robertson said. “That is a situation that is unacceptable.” Far too many of NATO’s troops, he said, are involved in administration or are in static, garrison basing rather than in mobile, quick-response fighting specialties.

If NATO operations are to succeed in Afghanistan and elsewhere, “we have got to generate more usable soldiers and have the political will to deploy more of them on multinational operations,” especially to deal with “asymmetric threats,” Robertson added.

“The blunt message from Colorado is going to be this: We need real, deployable soldiers, not paper armies,” Robertson insisted.

Taxpayers in member countries are being “ripped off,” he continued.

“They expect usable, deployable, survivable, well-equipped troops to be available to deal with each and every crisis that they are called upon to deal with, and yet we don’t have them.” Instead, NATO’s European troops are configured for the wrong threat, he said.

Robertson concludes his term this month; he will be succeeded by the foreign minister of the Netherlands, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer.

The NATO ministers, along with their military chiefs,
How large he thinks the Army needs to be. A recommendation to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld about
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future.

The exercise called the NRF into action on a fictional
Mediterranean island, where it encountered terrorists,
hostage-takers, and use of chemical weapons. Robertson
reported it to be a success in educating the assembled
ministers as to the new kinds of threats that face NATO
and in developing working relationships between the
alliance's political and military leaders, who normally
engage in separate exercises and wargames.

The seminar was intended to "inform and provoke but
not to reach decisions or conclusions," he said.

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld also
declared the seminar a success, saying that "progress has
been swift" since the US recommended that NATO min-
isters create the NRF.

The seminar "highlighted the need for that response
force to have capabilities that are agile, swift, and le-
thal," said Rumsfeld. And it emphasized the need to
"transform not only our forces and capabilities but also
to bring NATO's decision-making structures up to date,
so that NATO commanders can take decisive action
against fast-moving threats in the 21st century," he
added.

Pentagon officials said the US delegation took the
opportunity to press their NATO allies to invest more
funds in mobility, secure communications, and precision
weapons.

The Schoomaker Doctrine

The Army's new Chief of Staff, Gen. Peter J. Schoo-
maker, wants to reorganize the service into smaller, modu-
lar chunks that will be easier to mobilize and deploy yet
retain considerable combat punch.

Speaking with reporters at an Association of the US
Army convention in Washington in October, Schoomaker
said he believes the service "can get more power out of
smaller organizations." He also wants to shift emphasis
from the Army of the future to the Army of right now.

Schoomaker ordered the 3rd Infantry Division and 101st
Airborne Division, each now with three brigades, to look
at ways they could reorganize into five brigades each. A
division is nominally about 15,000 to 20,000 troops, and
a brigade usually has around 3,000 to 5,000 troops.
There would be fewer troops in each brigade, but they
would be beefed up with other forms of firepower, such
as aviation units and artillery, that normally deploy as
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The new brigades would be completely integrated with
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Rumsfeld has been skeptical of calls for increased
end strength of the services, but Schoomaker went
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mer, saying his instinct told him the Army needs more
troops. (See "Washington Watch: Rumsfeld's 'Open
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from a standing start to bring on more troops and get
them trained and into the field.

Schoomaker is also shifting the service's focus to sup-
porting today's troops, in contrast with the future-force
emphasis of his predecessor, Gen. Eric K. Shinseki,
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future, or "objective," force.

However, Shinseki started his course before Sept. 11,
2001, Schoomaker said, and couldn't have known the
demands that would soon be put upon the Army.

"We have to fight [using] the current force," Schoomaker
said. The new Army Chief considers the Stryker to be
part of the "current force."

"The future force can't be [used]—it doesn't exist,"
explained Schoomaker at the AUSA convention, as he
outlined the focus areas recently identified by senior
Army leadership.

To move the mind-set back to the here and now,
Schoomaker has decreed that the Army will stop using
terms such as "legacy" to describe current systems or
forces, since they will be with the service for many years
to come.

While he won't abandon Shinseki's Stryker brigade
concept—a concept that calls for lighter vehicles and a
smaller footprint designed for the fast-moving, urban-
warfare scenarios Shinseki expected to be the future
norm—Schoomaker is not pushing it further, either. He
said he has no plans at present to shift heavy elements
to light or vice versa.

Rather, he wants to make existing units smaller but
with nearly twice the lethality as they currently possess.

Nevertheless, getting the troops to the front faster will
require a means to get them there, and Schoomaker's
recommendations to Rumsfeld will no doubt play into the
Air Force's desire to conduct yet another Mobility Re-
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